

U.S. Patent No. 6,268,716 issued to Burnstein et al. (*Burnstein*). Claims 8-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,766,364 issued to Biamonte et al. (*Biamonte*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,268,716 issued to Burnstein et al. (*Burnstein*) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,191,943 issued to Tracy (*Tracy*). For at least the reasons set forth below, Applicants submit that claims 1-18 are not rendered obvious by *Biamonte*, *Tracy*, and *Burstein*.

Claim 1 recites the following:

a primary voltage regulator coupled to an electrical load and to a power supply to provide a first amount of power, the primary voltage regulator to detect power supplied to the electrical load and to control one or more additional voltage regulators; and

a secondary voltage regulator coupled to the electrical load, to the power supply, and to the primary voltage regulator, the secondary voltage regulator to provide a second amount of power, the secondary voltage regulator to provide a signal to the primary voltage regulator to indicate whether the secondary voltage regulator is enabled.

Thus, Applicants claim a secondary voltage regulator coupled to a primary voltage regulator, the secondary voltage regulator providing a signal to the primary voltage regulator to indicate whether the secondary voltage regulator is enabled. Claims 5, 11, and 15 similarly recite a second voltage regulator providing a signal to a primary voltage regulator to indicate whether the secondary voltage regulator is enabled.

Neither *Biamonte*, *Tracy*, nor *Burstein* disclose a second voltage regulator providing a signal to a primary voltage regulator to indicate whether the secondary voltage regulator is enabled. Therefore, whether taken individually or in combination, *Biamonte*, *Tracy*, and *Burstein* do not disclose, teach, or suggest the invention as claimed in claims 1, 5, 11, and 15.

Biamonte discloses a power supply system with a master voltage regulator and a plurality of slave voltage regulators. The master regulator generates a control signal to control the output

of the slave regulators to provide balanced load sharing. (See col. 1, lines 53-60). Each slave regulator has its own error amplifier circuitry, including a local error signal, to allow the slave regulator to control its own inductor current if the master control signal is outside of predefined limits. (See col. 3, lines 21-25). As stated in the Office Action, *Biamonte* does not disclose, teach, or suggest a second voltage regulator providing a signal to a primary voltage regulator to indicate whether the secondary voltage regulator is enabled.

Tracy discloses a docking station with a thermoelectric heat dissipation system for a docked portable computer. *Tracy* does not disclose, teach, or suggest a second voltage regulator providing a signal to a primary voltage regulator to indicate whether the secondary voltage regulator is enabled.

Burstein discloses a digital voltage regulator using current control. The Office Action states that *Burstein* does not teach a second voltage regulator providing a signal to a primary voltage regulator to indicate whether the secondary voltage regulator is enabled. The Office Action states that *Burstein* teaches returning status information, and Official Notice was taken that whether a device is enabled is an important bit of status information. Applicant traverses. The importance of returning a type of signal depends on the type of system involved. *Burstein's* system regulates voltage using current control. The master controller 18 uses a digital current-based control algorithm and ensures that the current flowing out of the switching regulator 10 matches the current flowing into the load 14, thereby maintaining the output voltage at a substantially constant level. (See col. 4, lines 62 to 63 and col. 5, lines 3 to 6). Therefore, *Burstein's* system generates a feedback signal representing the current passing through the switching circuit. (See col. 2, lines 16-18). *Burstein* does not disclose, teach, or suggest a second voltage regulator providing a signal to a primary voltage regulator to indicate whether the secondary voltage regulator is enabled.

Neither *Biamonte, Tracy*, nor *Burstein* disclose a second voltage regulator providing a signal to a primary voltage regulator to indicate whether the secondary voltage regulator is enabled. This feature is expressly recited in claims 1, 5, 11, and 15. Therefore, whether taken individually or in combination, *Biamonte, Tracy*, and *Burstein* do not disclose, teach, or suggest the invention as claimed in claims 1, 5, 11, and 15.

Claims 2-4, 5-10, 12-14 and 16-18 are dependent claims and distinguish for at least the same reasons as their independent base claims in addition to adding further limitations of their own. Therefore, Applicant submits that claims 1-18 are not rendered obvious by *Biamonte, Tracy*, and *Burstein* for at least the reasons set forth above.

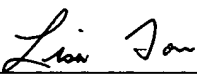
Conclusion

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claims 1-18 are in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is believed that such contact would further the examination of the present application.

Please charge any shortages and credit any overcharges to our Deposit Account number 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,
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